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THE STORY OF MALICON

By Benson Gold Thwaites



# THE STORY OF MADISON

By REUBEN GOLD THWAITES

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## THE STORY OF MADISON

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Jan. 6. 1900. CHAPTER I.

*Genesis—1836-1838.*

The immediate and lasting effects of the Black Hawk War (1832) were not only the humbling of the Indians of Northern Illinois and what afterwards became Southern Wisconsin, but the wide advertising of the country through which the contest had been waged. During and soon after the war, the newspapers of the Eastern States were filled with descriptions, more or less florid, of the scenic charms of the Rock River Valley, the groves and prairies on every hand, the park-like district of the Four Lakes, the Wisconsin River highlands, and the picturesque hills and almost impenetrable forests of Western Wisconsin. Books and pamphlets by the score were issued from the press, giving accounts of the newly-discovered paradise, and soon a tide of immigration set thither. Then necessarily followed, in short season, the survey and opening to sale of public lands heretofore reserved, and the purchase of what hunting grounds were still in possession of Indian tribes. The development of the theatre of war thus received a sudden and enormous impetus, so that when the country west of Lake Michigan was divorced from Michigan Territory in 1836, and reared into the independent Territory of Wisconsin, there were about twelve thousand whites within the borders of the nascent commonwealth; and many of the sites of future cities of our State were already occupied by agricultural settlers, isolated or in tiny groups.

Green Bay, a straggling French-Canadian settlement, by this time hoary with age, had come down from the seventeenth century, maintaining a sickly existence on the fur-trade and the lake traffic; Forts Howard (at Green Bay), Winnebago (at Portage), and Crawford (at Prairie du Chien) were surrounded by meagre hamlets, chiefly of French Creoles; the lead-mining region in the southwest, although sparsely settled, contained the bulk of the population, with Mineral Point as its center—a village having at the time an apparently brighter prospect than the new settlement at the mouth of Milwaukee River; there were a few notches carved, at wide intervals, from the gloomy forest bordering the western shore of Lake Michigan; but outside of the settlements just enumerated, Wisconsin was practically uninhabited by the whites. Here and there was to be found an Indian trader, the Yankee successor of the *courier de bois* of the old French regime, or some exceptionally adventurous farmer; but their far-separated cabins only emphasized the density of the wilderness, through which roamed untrammelled the shiftless, gipsy-like aborigines—the comparatively harmless Chippewas, Menomonees, Pottawatomies, and Winnebagoes.

In the summer of 1836 there were, so far as is now known, but five white men residing within the region comprised in the present county of Dane: Ebenezer Brigham, the original settler, at the East Blue Mound; Eben Peck, who lived with Brigham, boarding the latter and his farming and lead-mining hands, and entertaining chance travelers along the military highway between Forts Crawford and Winnebago; Berry Hancy, a ranchman squatting on the military road at what is now Cross Plains; a Frenchman named Olivier Armel, who maintained a temporary trading shanty, half brush and half canvas, near what we call Johnson street, on the wooded isthmus between Lakes Monona and Mendota; and Abel Rasdall,

an Indian trader, whose lonely cabin was on the eastern shore of Lake Kegonsa, about half a mile north of its outlet. A French half-breed trader, Michel St. Cyr, lived on the bank of Lake Mendota at what are to-day known as Livesey's Springs, three-fourths of a mile north of Pheasant Branch.

July 4, the Territorial government was organized,<sup>1</sup> with Henry Dodge as governor. The first Territorial legislature convened October 25 in the newly-platted village of Belmont, at Platte Mounds, in what is now La Fayette county. The two houses met in a story-and-a-half frame building, battlement-fronted; the highway which it faced bristled with stumps, while lead-miners' shafts and prospectors' holes thickly dimpled the shanty neighborhood.<sup>2</sup> At this session, Dane county was set off, among eleven others; and the Territorial



MEETING-PLACE OF FIRST TERRITORIAL LEGISLATURE  
At Belmont, Iowa County, October 25, 1836. Now in use as a barn.

capital was established at Madison — then a town on paper. A month had been spent in skirmishing on the capital location question, the principal contestants being Milwaukee, Racine, Koshkonong, City of the Second Lake, City of the Four Lakes, Madison, Fond du Lac, Peru, Wisconsin City, Portage, Helena, Belmont, Mineral Point, Platteville, Cassville, Bellevue, and Dubuque; and it was not until November 24 that the act of establishment was passed. Madison (so named from James Madison, then president of the United States) was selected among the many eager applicants, because its choice was in the nature of a compromise between the conflicting interests

<sup>1</sup> The Territory then embraced what is now Minnesota, Iowa, and a considerable region still farther westward.

<sup>2</sup> The building still stands, in use as a barn, but the village itself has almost faded from sight.

of Green Bay and the mining country; because it was midway between the settlements on the Mississippi River and on Lake Michigan, and would thus assist in developing the interior; because of the natural beauty of the site<sup>1</sup>—but chiefly because James Dnane Doty, who had just retired from the judgeship of the Wisconsin division of Michigan Territory, had, in connection with Stevens T. Mason, then governor of Michigan, purchased a wild tract of 1261 acres, of which the present Capitol Park is the center, and fought for the supremacy of their projected town with most remarkable tenacity.<sup>2</sup> Madison city lots are said to have been freely distributed among members, their friends, and others supposed to possess influence with them.

It was stipulated in the act, that the legislature should meet in Burlington (now in Iowa) until March 4, 1839, unless the public building at Madison, which was provided for, should sooner be completed. James D. Doty, John F. O'Neill, and Augustus A. Bird were chosen building commissioners.

Moses M. Strong commenced in February to plat the town site in the neighborhood of the Capitol Park, at a time when the ground was covered quite deep with snow. He was assisted in the city surveyed. the work by John Catlin, who had, a few months previous, been appointed post-master of the embryo city.<sup>3</sup> Catlin employed the half-breed St. Cyr to erect a log house for him on the site of the present postoffice, north corner Millin street and Wisconsin avenue. The body of the structure was put together in February—the first attempt to get a permanent building here—but it was not roofed and finished until summer.

<sup>1</sup> The soldiers and militiamen who, in 1832, painfully trudged through the broad marshes which in places abut our lakes, were inclined to scoff at the beauties of the proposed capital. In his *History of the Black Hawk War*, published in 1834, J. A. Wakefield, a militiaman, gives this description of the Four Lakes country, which is amusing in the light of present conditions:

"Here it may not be uninteresting to the reader to give a small outline of these lakes. From a description of the country, a person would very naturally suppose that those lakes were as little pleasing to the eye of the traveler as the country is. But not so. I think they are the most beautiful bodies of water I ever saw. The first one that we came to, was about ten miles in circumference, and the water as clear as crystal. The earth sloped back in a gradual rise; the bottom of the lake appeared to be entirely covered with white pebbles, and no appearance of its being the least swampy. The second one that we came to appeared to be much larger. It must have been twenty miles in circumference. The ground rose very high all round; and the heaviest kind of timber grew close to the water's edge. If these lakes were anywhere else except in the country they are, they would be considered among the wonders of the world. But the country they are situated in, is not fit for any civilized nation of people to inhabit. It appears that the Almighty intended it for the children of the forest. The other two lakes we did not get close enough to, for me to give a description of them; but those who saw them stated that they were very much like the others."

<sup>2</sup> The lands in the vicinity were first surveyed for the government, in December, 1834, by Orson Lyon, deputy U. S. surveyor. In the summer or autumn of 1835, William B. Slaughter entered the tract occupied by St. Cyr, at Livesey's Springs, and December 29 conveyed an interest therein to Judge Doty, who had it surveyed and platted (probably in June, 1836) for a projected city which he styled "City of the Four Lakes;" this he entered in competition for the capital, along with his proposed city of Madison, on the isthmus—thus having two strings to his bow. When Madison seemed the favorite of the two, he centered his fight on the latter, and the City of the Four Lakes never developed beyond the paper stage. As will be seen below, Madison was not actually platted until February, 1837.

Another paper city of the neighborhood, also an aspirant for the prize of the capital, was the "City of the Second Lake." The Milwaukee *Advertiser*, of July 21, 1836, says this name is a "somewhat lengthy cognomen of a new town that is about being laid off in the interior of our Territory." The *Advertiser* says the proposed city is "beautifully situated upon the site of an ancient Winnebago village at the outlet of the second of the far-famed Four Lakes. Judging from its position upon the map, we should say that the day is not far distant when this will be no inconsiderable place of business. It is on a direct line from this city to Cassville, and about equidistant between Peckatonia and Winnebago Portage; surrounded by a healthy and rich farming country, and may soon be the seat of justice of a county, and who knows but of a State."

<sup>3</sup> The park itself was surveyed in the summer of 1837, by Franklin Hathaway—now of Chicago), a nephew of Joshua Hathaway, of Milwaukee. In a letter to the writer, he thus describes Madison, as he then found it: "The ground between the third and fourth lakes was covered with a moderately heavy growth of timber, and an undergrowth of hazel and other bushes, quite dense in some places."



On their way home from the Belmont session, which had adjourned on December 9, several of the northern members of the legislature stopped at the Blue Mound and informed landlord

Peek of the selection of Madison as the Capital. Thereupon Peek conceived the idea of opening a house of entertainment for the accommodation of visitors to the first dwelling.

the proposed seat of government, and of the workmen whom he heard were soon to be sent out to erect the public building. With that end in view, he purchased some lots on which to build his prospective tavern, and in March sent on two Frenchmen to raise the house, the first inhabited building in Madison. April 15, 1837, Peek, with his wife Roseline, and their two-year old boy, Victor E., arrived on the scene, the pioneer white family at the Capital.<sup>1</sup> This primitive tavern, which was practically three log-cabins united, was styled the Madison House, and stood upon lot 6, block 107 (on the southwest side of Butler street), until, old and crumbling, it was (1857) torn down to make room for a more modern building.

On the morning of missioner Bird arrived Capitol build- thirty-six ers arrive.

and toilsome days, through rain and having had to ford or swim In this party was Josiah five children, the second Pierces had been brought mechanics, and for that boarding house on the son streets, a few lots In this establishment the were accommodated, tronized by the overflow, daughters, Rhoda and was the second school ment.<sup>3</sup> The corner stone July 4, "with appro- by Doty and a few Terri-

On September 6, came their seven children.

Early of A. A. and families. soon after intro-

children to the colonists. A. A. Bird brought out his wife and six children to the scene of action, late in December or early in January. On September 14 had occurred at the Madison House the first white birth on the isthmus — Wisconsin Victoria Peek, now the widow of Nels W. Wheeler, of Baraboo. A little later, James Madison Stoner made his appearance, the first white boy born

June 10, Building Com- from Milwaukee, with workmen, after a dreary overland journey of ten mud, with no roads, and the intervening rivers.<sup>2</sup> Pierce, with his wife and family in the place. The by Bird to cook for the purpose they erected a log corner of Butler and Wil- sontheast of the Pecks, majority of the workmen Peek's tavern being pa- Pierce had two grown-up Marcia by name; Rhoda mistress of the settle- of the Capitol was laid priate toasts and speeches" torial officials.

John Stoner and wife, with Prosper B. Bird, brother one of his original party, duced his wife and three



MRS. ROSELINE PECK  
First settler of Madison.  
Taken in 1874, in her 66th year.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Peek now lives at Baraboo, in her ninety-second year. Her son, Victor E., is manager of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Hotel at West Madison. Eben Peek started overland to California in 1845, and is supposed to have been killed by Indians on the plains.

<sup>2</sup> With Bird's party came Darwin Clark, as one of the carpenters; he afterwards taught the village school. The late Simon Mills, long prominently identified with educational interests in Madison, arrived in the afternoon of the same day, having walked out of Chicago, via Janesville and Winnequah. Mills began serving as deputy postmaster on the fourth of July, conducting the office in connection with a general store which he had opened upon his arrival. Mr. Clark died February 12, 1899.

<sup>3</sup> The Pierce family remained in Madison but two years, and then moved to Green county.





THE FIRST HOUSE IN MADISON

Built by the Pecks in 1837, to accommodate the builders of the Territorial Capitol.  
From photograph of a painting based on memory of old residents.

in the settlement. The families of Peck, Stoner, Prosper B. Bird, and A. A. Bird, Isaac H. Palmer and wife, the few workmen on the Capitol who had not returned to Milwaukee, two or three shop-keepers and officials, the little cluster of families at the Blue Mounds, the Haney household at Cross Plains, and perhaps three or four widely-separated Indian traders, constituted the entire white population of Dane county during the winter of 1837-38.

The little colony in Madison did not lack for amusement during this period, despite the physical barriers between it and the civilized world to the far East. Mrs. Peck has given us, in Durrie's *History of Madison*, a lively account of the dances, euchre parties, turtle-soup suppers, The first etc., with which the settlers whiled away the first winter in the Four-Lakes wild- winter. ness. She and her brother-in-law, Luther Peck, both appear to have been excellent violinists, and the puncheon floors of the Madison House were worn smooth with semi-weekly hops, in which "Virginia reel" and "monie-musk" constituted the chief programmes. Any who had not been initiated into their mysteries, previous to "settling," were obliged to submit to instructions of frontier citizen-ship. Overland travelers from Milwaukee, Fort Mineral Point were frequently present, and apparently enjoyed the gay society at Wisconsin's sylvan Capital.

The first popular subscription was for the hiring of a school-teacher, in the person of Miss Louisa M. Sawin. Aztalam, who was engaged at a weekly salary of two dollars, one for board. On March 1, 1838, her school was opened in the front end of Isaac H. Palmer's log dwelling-house, on lot 5, King and Clymer streets, every store. In these lim- in the thicket, two blocks houses, she assembled her fifteen children. The with the bark on, roughly-

anger holes serving as legs.

With a chair for the teacher, this outfit completed the equipment of Madison's first temple of learning. The teacher was a young woman of dignified presence, and of a firm but sweet disposition. The curriculum, however, was as crude as the surroundings. Only the merest rudiments of education were aimed at in the backwoods schools of those days; they lacked appliances and proper text-books, there was no well-defined system of district government, no school-fund, and the county treasury was often barren. The teachers were, as a rule, those young men and women in the pioneer families who were imbued with an ambitious spirit and chanced to understand "the three R's" a trifle better than their fellows. The professionally-educated schoolmaster was not then abroad—he did not reach Madison until a dozen or more years later. There are probably few schools to-day, in the most inaccessible portions of our country, so meagerly equipped as the majority of those scattered at wide intervals throughout the Northwest, in the period of which we treat.



MRS. LOUISA M. SAWIN  
Who, as Miss Brayton, taught the first school in  
Madison, March, 1838.  
This picture was taken in her 60th year.

scription raised in Madison a school-teacher, in the person of Miss Louisa M. Sawin, who was engaged at a weekly salary of two dollars, one for board. On March 1, 1838, her school was opened in the front end of Isaac H. Palmer's log dwelling-house, on lot 5, King and Clymer streets, every store. In these lim- in the thicket, two blocks houses, she assembled her fifteen children. The with the bark on, roughly-

## CHAPTER II.

*Early Annals of the Town—1838-1845.*

The town of Madison was a plant of slow growth. In the summer of 1838, the census revealed the presence in the settlement of only sixty-two people, and it is recorded<sup>1</sup> that there were at that time "not more than a dozen houses, built and in process of erection, counting every cabin and shanty within three miles of the Capitol;" while Indian wigwams were frequently erected within sight of the doors. For the matter of that, we can still—sixty-one years later (1899), with a population of nearly 20,000—frequently see Winnebago tepees on the shores of Lakes Mendota and Monona; especially upon the latter, a mile-and-a-half from the Capitol.

The little village was charmingly situated in the primeval wilderness. In 1885, the late Jerome R. Brigham—a nephew of the Blue Mounds pioneer, Ebenezer, and himself one of Madison's early teachers—thus wrote of the Madison of his young manhood: "Those who only know of Madison, now, have but a feeble conception of its won-

derful and fascinat-  
the beginning. At  
our Capital [1839]  
a well-kept lawn,  
white-oak and  
with a fragrant  
all about the lake  
no growth of m-  
thicket such as  
when the semi-an-  
to do the duty of  
mower; but the  
quite uninter-  
the surface rose  
knolls on either  
no fence about the  
of the present



TURVILLE'S BEACH, LAKE MONONA

There were black-oaks among them, they fail to remain in the picture I recall. The lakes then lay in natural silver beauty, prettily framed in pebbly beach, now lost by the dam on Mendota and the railways on Monona. Madison in 1839 was wonderfully beautiful—not rugged or romantic, which is ordinarily picturesque, but for simple, quiet beauty, unequalled by anything I remember."

In the early annals of this peaceful village in the undulating oak grove between Mendota and Monona,—surrounded on every hand by far-stretching lakes and marshes, and thus in a measure isolated from her rural neighbors,—the historian finds little of stirring interest; and that

<sup>1</sup> Robert L. Ream's reminiscences, in Durrie's *History of Madison* (Madison, 1874), p. 102.

little almost always the reflex of the legislature, which annually came and went with much bustle and sometimes brawl, leaving behind a quiet wake in which the denizens of the hamlet might meditate at will.

Early in the year 1838, Commissioner Bird had stopped "day work" on the Capitol, and the contract for finishing the structure was (April 17) awarded to James Morrison. The respective accounts of Bird and Morrison with the Territory, afterwards became a fruitful source of litigation and legislative claims, extending throughout the entire Territorial period.

During the summer, Bird and Morrison erected the American Hotel, on the site where the First National bank now stands—an establishment which, under a succession of landlords, long made a luminous figure in the history of Madison.

November 26, the legislative assembly first met here. But, as only fifty boarders could be provided for in the place, it was proposed to adjourn to Milwaukee; that village, however, could not promise better accommodations, so a recess was taken until January 21 (1839), the legislature, when the situation was somewhat improved. Says Mr. Ream:<sup>1</sup> "[With the session] came crowds of people. The public houses were literally crammed—shake-downs were looked upon as a luxury, and lucky was the guest considered whose good fortune it was to rest his weary limbs on a straw or hay mattress. \* \* \* We had then no theatres or any places of amusement, and the long winter evenings were spent in playing various games of cards, checkers, and backgammon. Dancing was also much in vogue. Col. [James] Maxwell [member of council from Rock and Walworth] was very gay, and discoursed sweet music on the flute, and Ben. C. Eastman [one of the clerks] was an expert violinist. They two furnished the music for many a French four, cotillion, Virginia reel, and jig, that took place on the puncheon floors of the old log cabins [forming the Madison House]. \* \* \* Want of ceremony, fine dress, classic music, and other evidences of present society life, never deterred us from enjoying ourselves those long winter evenings."

But Madison did not entirely give itself up to the business of boarding and amusing the legislature, although this was long the leading industry. A keen desire to educate the children of Dane county the settlement was early manifest, and aroused a laudable public sentiment. In organized. the spring of 1839, Dane county was organized for judicial purposes. The Territorial school code had been somewhat modified by the legislature of that year. "The rate-bill system of taxation, previously in existence, was repealed, and a tax on the whole county for building school-houses and supporting schools was provided for."<sup>2</sup> With the county organization came an immediate influx of population, and this fact, together with the improvement in the code, gave rise to a revival of interest in educational matters, which had lain dormant in Madison since the close of Miss Brayton's school. The number of children had materially increased, as many of the new settlers were accompanied by their families. There were now in Madison, fully a score of proper age for elemental instruction.

The taxable value of property was at a low ebb, and the fund accruing from the sale of school lands could not be made available until the organization of a State government, so that for many years the public school moneys had necessarily to be supplemented by rate-bills, school-house, even to pay the beggarly salaries then in vogue among district pedagogues. But the spirit of local pride always induced the pioneer residents of the infant capital to be generous, even beyond their means. With large hopes of the future, and a desire not to be outdone elsewhere, a movement to build a school-house was successfully carried through in April. Governor Doty gave permission to the settlers to use for the purpose lot 4, block 98, on the north corner of Pinckney and Dayton streets; and there, out in the "brush," was erected, in time for the sum-

<sup>1</sup> Durrie's *Madison*, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Dane County*, pp. 140, 141.

mer term, the first building constructed in Madison for school purposes. It would be denominated a cabin in these days, but in those was thought to be an eminently creditable affair, having cost about \$70, the amount being raised by popular subscription.

During the first term, it was unplastered and but ill glazed. A few rough benches were put in—slabs from the saw mill on Lake Mendota, with the flat side uppermost, and supported on pegs. In that period, sawed lumber and "store" furniture were scarce articles, and in many a Madison house the seats were but rough, three-legged stools. The first teacher in this public school was Rhoda Pierce (summer term of 1839); then came Edgar S. Searle, for the winter of 1839-40; among others who followed, were E. M. Williamson, Dr. Timothy Wileox, Clarissa R. Pierce, Lucia A. Smith, Darwin Clark, Rev. A. M. Badger, Benjamin Holt, David H. Wright, and Matilda A. Smedley—Miss Smedley being the last teacher to occupy the building. The "Little Brick"—costing about \$1,100, and much admired by Madisonians of that period, was erected in 1845, and continued in use as a school-house until 1887, when it was torn down to make room for the new Third Ward school.

The school-house  
other public pur-

First band prac-  
Sunday seasons, two  
school. The first

established with-  
of the early Congre-  
alluding to this lat-  
scribes the rude  
rods northwest of the  
brush, through which  
led, was the primi-  
building rudely con-  
seated; almost 18x22  
and having only one  
Here the first Sun-  
son was started by a  
nent among whom  
rison."



RESIDENCE OF GOVERNOR DOTY  
Still standing (1889) near corner of Doty and Pineknay streets.

The entire pop-  
at the close of 1839  
the school tax raised in the county that year amounted only to \$393.13.

On the first Monday in May, 1840, Clarissa R. Pierce opened a "select school for young misses," at \$3 per quarter, in a little frame building within the limits of the Capitol park; and there continued her institution for nearly two years. This structure had originally been put up as a tool-house and office for Contractor Morrison, while the Capitol was being erected. It was an uncouth, one-story box, about 12x16 feet on the ground, with low ceiling, and situated some 200 feet in front of where the State Bank is now located. For several reasons, it did duty as a school-house, private and public, and for a time was the place where the village debating club was wont to assemble in the evenings and wisely discuss questions that had puzzled sages since the time of Solomon—the forum

"Where village statesmen talked with looks profound."

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Sunday school was  
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structure: "A few  
park, in a thicket of  
a few foot-paths only  
five school house, a  
structed and poorly  
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low story. \* \* \*  
day school in Madi-  
few ladies, promi-  
was Mrs. James Mor-

ulation of the village  
was but 146, and



Subsequently, Governor Doty had the old tool-house moved to the spot on Pinckney street where Owen's plumbing establishment is now situated. This site was then a part of the governor's garden; the executive mansion of that period can still be seen on Doty street, just around the corner below, its humble proportions quite lost in the shadows of the neighboring three-story bricks. Charles Doty, the governor's son and private secretary, used the former tool-shed for his office. In 1849, the first revisers of the statutes met there and accomplished their important task. Then Abraham Ogden, J. P., became its occupant, and many a village "cow case" was therein adjudicated.

December 25, 1841, the county school commissioners set apart the town of Madison as a separate school district, denominating it "District No. 1, Town of Madison." This was the first official action taken in Dane county relative to the organization of schools, under the Territorial laws. Heretofore, public education here had been quite informally carried on, in part by county tax and in part by private subscription, with no well-defined regulations. In 1840, the legislature had passed an act designed to secure the more adequate support and government of the schools. Thereafter there was more system, but it was not until twenty years later that Madison teachers began to receive anything approaching adequate compensation, in regular payments. This was owing chiefly to the poverty of the settlers, who were unable to pay heavy taxes.

The settlement made slow progress, in point of population. The census, in 1842, revealed the presence of but 172 people, a gain of 26 in two years; in 1844 there were only 216 Madisonians. Nevertheless, the little band of pioneers was full of hope, and sought courageously to push affairs, as though the Capital were growing apace. Education seems ever to have been uppermost in the public mind, in those struggling days. The grade was still necessarily low in the public school, and some of the leading men — such as John Catlin, Simeon Mills, David Brigham, and James Morrison — organized the Madison Select Female School (May, 1842).

David Brigham, who had himself been one of the instructional corps in Harvard College, was delegated to choose a preceptress. He accordingly engaged Mrs. Maria M. Gay, of Marietta, Ohio — a superior teacher and cultured woman, and eminently well qualified successfully to conduct such a school under more favorable circumstances. But Madison was too ambitious; it could not then support an institution of this character. Her terms were too high for those early days in the backwoods; not meeting with sufficient encouragement she was obliged, after a year's trial, to abandon the enterprise. Five years later, the attempt was renewed in the Madison Female Academy, which had a successful career (in a building on the site of the present high school) from 1847 to 1854, being succeeded by the city high school.



## CHAPTER III.

*Madison as a Village—1846-1856.*

Let us take a glimpse of Madison in the summer of 1846, when the settlement was nine years old. By act of legislature approved February 3, it had been incorporated as a village. The population had taken somewhat of a jump during the two preceding years, being now 626. Yet at no time in Territorial days did Madison make the progress which most other Western villages were making, when advantageously situated. This was owing to several reasons: (1) The efforts being annually made to remove the Capital to some other place, generally to Milwaukee; (2) the spirit of bitterness which was thereby engendered between Madison and the metropolis; (3) the record of three distinct village plats. The Capital-removal agitation was not quieted for many years,—one occasionally hears of it even in our day,—and it took a long time to secure legal decisions settling the question of titles. At the period we are considering, three-fourths of the village site was covered by trees and hazel-brush, and everything was in a crude condition. The village hogs slept at night in the cellars of the Capitol, and the park itself was a mere jungle of wild grass, scrub oak, and bushes. The habits of the settlers were simple; their wants were easily satisfied; very little money was in circulation; the county and Territory paid its officials' salaries and other dues in scrip, which was seldom negotiable at par; social life was purely democratic in its character,<sup>1</sup> doors and windows were unfastened at night, because there was but little worth stealing, and thieves and tramps had not yet been attracted hither. Postage was 25 cents for a single sheet, hence there was little correspondence with friends left at home in the East. The journey to Madison from New York State, or New England, was a two weeks' laborious trip, by lake to Milwaukee, thence by foot or stage nearly a hundred miles across the country. The Wisconsin Capital was a primitive backwoods hamlet, far removed from the centers of civilization, and as yet had not materially changed the aspect of nature on the interlaine isthmus. "Not over half a dozen houses had been erected westward or northward of the Capitol square; and the forest northeastward remained unbroken below" where is now Flom's Hotel.<sup>2</sup>

As already intimated, the sessions of the Territorial legislature were the events of the year at Madison, and attracted prominent men from all quarters of Wisconsin. The crude hotels were filled each winter with legislators, lobbyists, and visiting politicians. Old settlers delight to rehearse tales of what was done and said at these annual gatherings of the clans—it was not until 1882 that the sessions were made biennial. The humors of the day were often uncouth. There was a deal of horse-play, hard-drinking and profanity, and

<sup>1</sup> Says a pioneer in *Durrie*, p. 165: "Social gatherings, from their freedom and intellectual cast, left little to desire. Fun and frolic was the chief characteristic, and more of it in a week than ten years now witness. \* \* \* It was a golden era, which once passed will never return." One must take reminiscences of this sort, with a grain of allowance; as men advance in years, the times of their youth inevitably appear to be the "good old times," in sad contrast with the present; it has always been thus, since the earth was young. No doubt there was far less conventionality in the pioneer days, which to many may seem a better order of things; but there was probably no more real enjoyment at the time, among the pioneers, than among their descendants—very likely, life in Madison was less worth living.

<sup>2</sup> *Durrie*, p. 170.

occasionally a personal encounter during the heat of discussion; but an under-current of good-nature was generally observable, and strong attachments between the leaders were more frequently noticeable than feuds. Dancing and miscellaneous merry-making were the order of the times; and although there was a dearth of womankind in these Madison seasons, society at the Capital was thought to be fashionable. Even when the legislature was not in session, Madison remained the social and political center of the Territory, and travelers between the outlying settlements on the shores of the Mississippi, and Lake Michigan or Green Bay, were wont to tarry here upon their way. Several of them have left us, in journals and in letters, pleasing descriptions of their reception by the good-natured inhabitants, and the impressions made on them by the natural attractions of this beauty spot.

The old Territorial legislature had much to do, winter by winter, in carving out new counties; molding in detail the statutory laws; making political apportionments after each new census, in a domain rapidly filling up population — and now and quarrels with the Territory — the quality of legislation vailed a healthy political acrimony was sometimes killing in the council chamber of Brown county, by his Vineyard, of Grant (February 11, 1842), was the trial days, and gained for notoriety all over the country.

The village trustees had three weeks before they proposed to lease the hydropower of the corporation.

It has been ascertained that there is within the corporation limits of Madison, a fall or difference of elevation between the Third and Fourth of the Four Lakes, sufficient if improved, to create a water-power of considerable magnitude." Simeon Mills made a proposition, which was accepted, to lease this water-power for sixty years; but later, after a fresh survey of the lake levels, he abandoned the enterprise. At various times thereafter, the Catfish water-power project was publicly discussed, but nothing more came of it than a small grist mill at the outlet of Lake Mendota, which was destroyed by fire a few years since. The city has lately regained possession of the dam, and will hereafter use it merely as a means of regulating the level of the lakes.

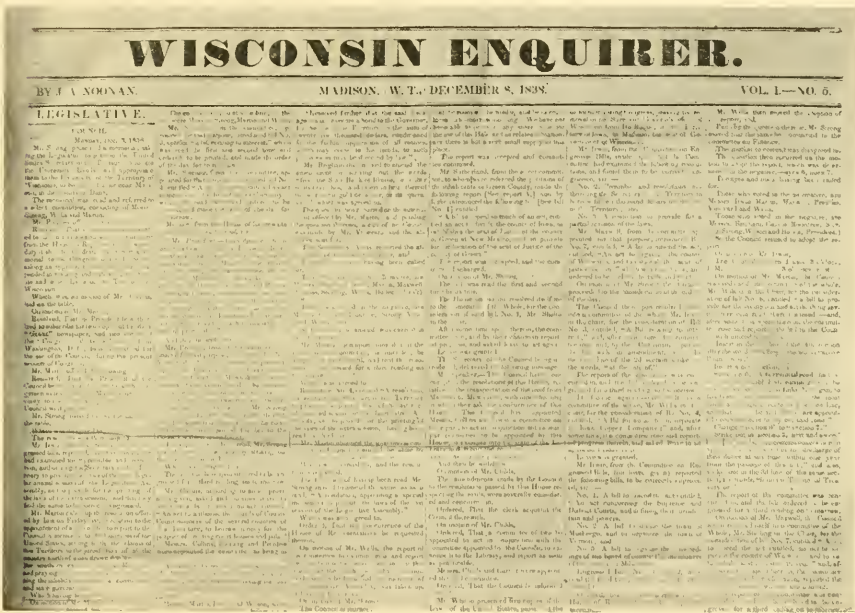
Green Bay had a newspaper (the *Intelligencer*) as early as 1833; the Milwaukee *Advertiser* had been founded in 1836, and the *Sentinel* in 1837; while Mineral Point witnessed the birth of the *Miners' Free Press* in the latter year. But it was November, 1838, before the *Enquirer* was born, the first newspaper in Madison; the second was the *Express*, founded in 1839; in 1842, the *Wisconsin Democrat* appeared upon the scene; in 1844, the *Argus*; the *Statesman* in 1850, the *State Journal* in 1852, and the *Patriot and Staats-Zeitung* in 1854. The first regularly-issued daily in the village — there had been daily legislative editions before that — was the *Argus and Democrat* in 1852, the present *Daily Democrat* being established in 1868; the *State Journal* began with a daily in 1852.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed history of the Madison newspaper press, see *Catalogue of Newspapers, Wis. Hist. Soc.* (1898), pp. 138-147.



MILL RACE, AT OLD GRIST MILL

The Madison newspapers have, from the first, been edited by men of considerable reputation in their profession. The *Enquirer* was established by Josiah A. Noonan, who was, for a generation, one of the most prominent men in the State; among others who were, at various times, connected with this journal, were C. C. Sholes, George Hyer, J. G. Knapp, and Harrison Reed, whose names are indissolubly connected with the work of molding the young commonwealth. W. W. Wyman, in his day one of the leading citizens of Wisconsin, founded the *Express*, and such men of influence as Julius T. Clark, William Welch, Jerome R. Brigham, and David Atwood were at different periods engaged as its editors. The first *Wisconsin Democrat* was the child of J. G. Knapp, among whose associates were J. P. Sheldon (founder of the *Detroit*



FIRST NEWSPAPER IN DANE COUNTY  
Facsimile from file in State Historical Library.

*Gazette*) and George Hyer; it suspended in 1844, and another paper of the same name was established (1846) by Beriah Brown, one of the foremost Territorial journalists. The *Wisconsin Argus* was founded by Simon Mills, John Y. Smith, and Benjamin Holt, with whom, in time, became associated Horace A. Tenney, David T. Dickson, and S. D. Carpenter—all of them men whose history is that of the Wisconsin of their day. The *Wisconsin Statesman* was conducted by W. W. and A. U. Wyman (the latter becoming, in after years, treasurer of the United States), with William Welch as associate editor. The *State Journal* (founded by David Atwood in 1852) was the successor of the *Palladium*, itself the successor of the *Express* and the *Statesman*; as the *Express* was founded in 1839, the *State Journal* has always dated its birth back to that year.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *State Journal* for August 16, 1889, article "Fifty Years Old."

However correct may be the genealogy, this paper can boast a long bead-roll of editorial worthies; among them, Horace Rublee, George Gary, Harrison Reed, A. J. Turner, James Ross, Hayden K. Smith, J. O. Culver, Levi Alden, O. D. Brandenburg, Horace A. Taylor, A. J. Dodge, and Amos P. Wilder — several of these, men who in the later years of their life achieved wide reputation in this and in other fields of usefulness. The name of the *Wisconsin Patriot* recalls that of its old chief, S. D. Carpenter, who is well remembered among the newspaper men of the State. The *Daily Democrat*, which succeeded the *Wisconsin Union*, itself the successor of the *Wisconsin Capitol* (1865) and the *Wisconsin Democrat* (1846), has been the product, in various years, of such men of character and influence as J. B. and A. C. Parkinson, George Raymer, R. M. Bashford, L. M. Fay, H. W. Hoyt, E. E. Bryant, and O. D. Brandenburg. Situated at the



PINCKNEY STREET, ABOUT 1870

Showing old Methodist Church (with square tower on left); American House (on site of present First National Bank); and part of United States Hotel (in right foreground).

political and educational center of the State, in close and daily touch with the mainsprings of action in these two important fields, Madison journals have always had a marked influence on public opinion. Its editors are forced to look beyond the affairs of their immediate neighborhood, and discuss men and measures of the State at large; their constituency is the commonwealth, and this fact has given unusual breadth and freshness to their treatment of public affairs.

It was during the existence of Madison as a village, that the majority of our principal church societies were organized. The first in the field had been the Episcopalians. The following paper, dated July 25, 1839, is the earliest known document in the history of the Madison churches — most of the signatures are those of leading pioneers:

"We, whose names are hereunto attached, believing the Holy Scriptures to be the word of God, and deeply feeling the importance of maintaining divine service in our town, and preferring the Protestant



Episcopal Church to any other, we hereby unite ourselves into a parish of the said church for the above and every other purpose which is requisite and necessary to the ease.

"Madison, July 25, 1839.

"Signed by John Catlin, J. A. Noonan, Henry Fake, H. Fellows, M. Fellows, A. Hyer, H. Dickson, H. C. Fellows, Adam Smith, A. Lull, Almira Fake, La Fayette Kellogg, George C. Hyer, J. Taylor, A. A. Bird, David Hyer."

Nothing appears to have immediately come out of this movement. March 8, 1840, a meeting of five citizens<sup>1</sup> was held in the Capitol, and a society organized, with the name Apostolic Church, and Rev. Washington Philo as clergyman. Mr. Philo served for a year—meetings being held in the Capitol—and was succeeded by Rev. Richard F. Cadle, of the Green Bay mission. Mr. Cadle can not have long remained, for we read in the village annals that December 19, 1845, Rev. Stephen McHugh accepted a call to Madison, and set about "the organization of a parish" to be known as Grace Church; under his ministry, the ladies of the society raised \$150, with which were purchased the two lots occupied by the present church building. Resigning in 1847, Mr. McHugh does not seem to have had a successor until 1850, when Rev. W. H. Woodward, of Pontiac, Mich., accepted the call of the vestry. During his pastorate, a brick building was erected on the church lots. Thereafter, there was regular service. The foundations of the present stone church were laid in the autumn of 1855; but the old brick building, long used as a chapel and Sunday school, was not demolished until 1868.

Mr. Philo had been in charge of his flock some seven months, when another church society was formed in the settlement. October 4, 1840, nine persons,<sup>2</sup> also meeting in the old Capitol, "united themselves in an organization as a Christian Church in Madison." Rev. Elbert Slingerland, a Reformed Dutch Church missionary, was the organizer of this movement, and induced his little band to assume the name of that denomination; but upon his departure (June, 1841), they attached themselves to the Presbyterian and Congregational Convention of Wisconsin, and adopted the name of the Congregational Church in Madison, thus being the founders of the present society. Rev. J. M. Clark, of Kentucky, now took charge of the work, being succeeded in 1843 by Rev. S. E. Miner, of New York, who was in the employ of the Home Missionary Society; he in turn was succeeded (October, 1846) by Rev. Charles Lord, of Missouri, who was installed in 1852, at the time the church became self-supporting. At first, the Congregationalists met in the Capitol, then the favorite meeting place of what churches there were in the community. Next, they sought shelter in the old Peek tavern building, the first house in the village; then in a spacious new barn; next in a little frame building on Webster street (the first church in Madison), which was dedicated in 1846, and in its day deemed a lordly structure, from having cost \$1,800—the same building now occupied by the German Presbyterian society, under the ministry of the Rev. H. A. Winter. It was upon this building that the first public bell was hung in Madison (July, 1847). In ten years (1856) the church house had become too small for the Congregationalists, and meetings were thereafter held in Bacon's Commercial College, until they could erect (1857–58) the brick chapel on West Washington Avenue, costing \$1,400. This was occupied until May, 1874, when the present church home was completed and dedicated.

The first sermon preached in Madison was undoubtedly that of Rev. Salmon Stebbins, presiding elder of the Milwaukee District of the Illinois Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In the early winter of 1837, he made his way through the woods to this place, and preached (November 28) to the workmen engaged on the Capitol. It is thought that he found none of his faith here, yet Madison, as the Territorial Capital, was in 1838 placed at the head of the list of missions, being on the same circuit with Fort Winnebago (Portage) and Muscoda.

<sup>1</sup> David Hyer, John Catlin, J. A. Noonan, P. W. Matts, and Adam Smith.

<sup>2</sup> David Brigham, Mrs. E. F. Brigham, W. N. Seymour, Mrs. A. M. Seymour, Mrs. M. A. Morrison, Mrs. E. Wynan, Mrs. C. R. Pierce, Mrs. A. Catlin, and Mrs. Elbert Slingerland.

The preacher at this time was the Rev. Samuel Pilsbury. Rev. Alfred Brunson, the foremost of the circuit riders of early Wisconsin, arrived in Madison in December, 1840, as a member of the legislature, and throughout that winter exhorted his fellow members as well as the villagers, the meetings being held in the Capitol. In 1841, a regular class was formed here, with eleven members, but it was several years before Madison was anything more than a mission. The first Methodist church (now "The Fair" store) was erected in 1850-52, but for a long time the society was feeble. The present stone church was commenced in 1876.

The German Evangelical Association had a missionary preacher in Madison as early as 1844 — Rev. J. G. Miller, whose circuit was the Galena mission, which included portions of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa. His was the first German sermon at the Capitol. Mr. Miller was, in 1845, assigned to the new Winnebago mission, which embraced the entire Territory of Wisconsin; but in 1846, the name was changed to Madison mission. The German population of Madison grew apace, so that, after being regularly served by various preachers, the association organized a permanent society in 1853, and commenced the erection of a church building — the present brick structure being completed in 1865.

The Baptist church was organized December 23, 1847, with Rev. H. W. Read as the first pastor: it was incorporated in 1853, and during the same year the present brick building was commenced — being, at the time, the best church building in the village.

The Presbyterians organized their church society October 1, 1851, with Rev. H. B. Gardiner as stated supply, and for a time occupied Lewis's Hall, on the east corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Johnson street. In 1853, they moved into their own building, opposite Lewis's Hall; but in 1892 occupied their present quarters on the south corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Dayton street, their former building being converted into a Masonic Temple.

We hear of Catholic services being held in Madison as early as 1843, by Rev. Martin Kundig, of Milwaukee. A chronicler reports that Father Kundig was in that year attempting to raise funds for the erection of a church; but nothing seems to have come of the effort, for it was not until May 28, 1854, that the corner stone of St. Raphael's was laid. Holy Redeemer church (R. C.) was erected in 1857, but not dedicated until 1869. The German Evangelical Lutherans also built their church in 1857. St. Patrick's church (R. C.) was erected in 1888.

We have seen that the first house in Madison was a hotel — Peck's log tavern, built for the accommodation of chance travelers, and the workmen engaged in constructing the Capitol. Early hotels. Pierce's dwelling, the second in the place, was a boarding house for the mechanics. It is natural that, considering the genesis and character of Madison, hotels should have played a considerable part in its history, especially in the earlier days.

To accommodate the legislators in the winter of 1838-39, two new hotels had been erected, the American House (kept by Messrs. Fake & Cotton) and the Madison Hotel (with Charles H. Bird as proprietor); while Peck's had now assumed the lofty name of Mansion House. The American stood on the site of the present First National Bank, and the Madison on the north corner of Main and Pinckney streets. In the latter house, the Territorial supreme court was organized June 1, 1838, and during the following winter it was headquarters for Governor Dodge and the leading Territorial officials; in the former (destroyed by fire September 5, 1868), the Territorial legislature held its session during February, 1839. A member of the succeeding legislature<sup>1</sup> wrote of these hotels: "The American was of wood, two stories above the basement, with a spacious attic; and such was the crowd when the legislature was in session, that the attic (all in one room) was filled with beds on the floor to accommodate lodgers, and it got the cognomen of the 'school section.' The Madison Hotel was not so large, but equally crowded, and

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Alfred Brunson, in Durrie's *Madison*, p. 135.



besides these, every private house that possibly could accommodate boarders, was filled to overflowing. The Territory was generally well represented on such occasions, and every one had 'an axe to grind.' Other hosteries of the pioneer period, but built in later years, were the City Hotel, Lake House, National Hotel, Kentucky House, and Schenmerhorn House.

Madison had no public cemetery worthy of the name, until 1846. The summit of University Hill is said to have been the first burial place—"the grave [of a man killed by lightning] being at the southeast corner of the present central building,"<sup>1</sup> before the new south Cemeteries.

wing was added (1898-99). Soon after, a plot was opened in Greenbush, on the city slope of Dead Lake Ridge, but it was small and unimproved. In 1846, the block in the present Sixth Ward, now known as Orton Park, was inaugurated as a burial ground, and appropriately fenced and ornamented; but in time these three-and-a-half acres became choked with graves, and Forest Hill Cemetery, the present beautiful burial place of the city, was opened in 1858. This cemetery embraces sixty acres; the Catholic grounds, across the street, opened two years later, contain seventeen.<sup>2</sup>

The admission of Wisconsin to the sisterhood of States, in 1848, brought the school lands into market, introduced improvements in the school code, and, by convincing capitalists that the Farwell's real commonwealth had come to stay, gave a great impetus to the State's mercantile estate "boom," and manufacturing interests as well as to immigration. Madison, which up to this period had been languishing, now entered upon a more prosperous career, reasonably sure of retention as the seat of government—the location here, by the Territorial legislature, of the State University, being deemed an additional guarantee of good faith in this particular. In 1849, L. J. Farwell, a Milwaukee capitalist, took up his residence here. Being a man of marked public spirit, he made extensive improvements, and began to "boom" the place by the liberal distribution of descriptive pamphlets, thus attracting the attention of the outside public to the advantages of Madison as a home. The effect was soon seen in a considerable influx of population, and an increase in business investments. The village school interests, always quickly affected by the condition of the public exchequer, were at once bettered by this improvement in the general prospect; and although they met with many disasters during the next few years, because of general financial panics and local disappointments, this period may be set down as the date at which genuine progress began.<sup>3</sup>

The population of the village in 1850 was 1,672, a gain of over a hundred per cent in three years. There were strong signs of prosperity, this season, and over a hundred new buildings "An inhabited were erected. A writer in the *Argus*, this summer, speaks of Madison as being, forest." in spite of its rapid growth, so hidden in the trees that travelers "can only see half of it at a time" and go away with a poor opinion of its size, for "it does not show off to advantage, being, in short, an inhabited forest." During the year, a sale of 5,320 acres of school and University lands in Dane county brought \$29,280.03 to the common school fund. The census, in April, showed the presence of 317 persons of school age, of whom 153 were in attendance. In September there were 503 of school age, showing a considerable growth of population during the summer.

During the early months of 1853, the legislature was importuned for a charter, by a party of speculators calling themselves the Rock River Valley Union Railroad Company. It was the

<sup>1</sup> H. A. Tenney, in *Durrie*, p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> Denning Fitch served as superintendent of Forest Hill Cemetery from 1858 to 1894; his son, W. D. Fitch, from 1894 to 1896; William H. Alford, from 1896 to the spring of 1899; the present superintendent is H. J. Minch.

<sup>3</sup> The first circus reached Madison in 1848. The legislature was in session, and the body adjourned thereto "without the formality of a vote."—*Durrie*, p. 165.

first time that a Wisconsin legislature had been "worked" by a railway lobby, and the methods employed this winter were such as to cause a sensation throughout the State, and to scandalize the Monks of Monk's Hall. The lobbyists engaged a club house on the corner of Monona Avenue and Doty street (site of the present residence of Mrs. David Atwood), which they called "Monk's Hall;" and herein were given superb dinners and held midnight orgies, the remembrance of which is still vivid in the minds of those who participated in them. The "Monks of Monk's Hall" represented all shades of political belief, and were popularly dubbed "The Forty Thieves"—a term long familiar in Wisconsin political nomenclature, from having later been applied to William A. Barstow and his political adherents.

This year (1853) marked the opening of the first bank in Madison—the State, which began business in January, with \$50,000 capital; this was the first bank organized in Wisconsin under the new general banking act. The Bank of the West opened in March, 1854, with a capital of \$100,000; in October of the same year, the Dane County opened its doors, followed (1855) by Dickinson's private bank, the Merchants' Bank of Madison (1856), the Wisconsin Bank of Madison (1856), the Bank of Madison (1860), and the First National (1863). The directory for 1866 showed but four then in operation—the Farmers', the First National, the State, and the Madison. In 1875, there were five—the First National, the State, the German, the Park Savings, and the State Savings Institution. To day (1899) there are still five banking institutions in our midst—the First National, the State, the German American, the Capital City, and the Bank of Wisconsin.

The year 1854 was notable in Madison from the arrival of the first railway train—over the Milwaukee & Mississippi line, the pioneer railway of Wisconsin, and the modest progenitor of the present Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul system. The company's bridge over Lake Monona had been begun in the previous year, and its station had been completed on the first of January. The long-expected passenger train came over the bridge May 18, but the track to the station was not laid until the 22d; on the afternoon of the 23d, the train—drawn by two engines, and composed of 32 coaches laden with about 2,500 people—was pulled into the yard, amid the plaudits of thousands of spectators, many of whom, settling in the country early, had never seen a railway train. Prominent figures in the spectacle were several Milwaukee fire companies "in gay red uniforms, with their glistening engines," who rode on flat cars in the rear of the train, accompanied by bands of music and a piece of artillery; while "bright-colored parasols, ranged in groups along the shore, lent liveliness to the scene." The *State Journal*, in its enthusiastic report, assures us that "It was a grand but strange spectacle to see this monster train, like some huge, unheard-of thing of life, with breath of smoke and flame, emerging from the green openings—scenes of pastoral beauty and quietude—beyond the placid waters of the lake." There was the usual "procession of the multitude" to the Capitol park, "where tables were spread, and a dinner prepared," and oratory without stint. Later, the railway was projected to Prairie du Chien. The telegraph had reached Madison, along country roads, seven years before.

By act of legislature, approved February 13, 1855, the village of Madison was incorporated into a separate, self-governed school district, apart from the town, with six directors who were styled "The Board of Education of the Village of Madison." The present city school board is its lineal descendant. The village experienced another mild "boom" this year. Horace Greeley and Bayard Taylor paid the place a visit,<sup>1</sup> and in letters to

<sup>1</sup> Greeley was here in March, and Taylor in May. The former wrote: "Madison has the most magnificent site of any inland town I ever saw. \* \* \* The University crowns a beautiful eminence a mile west of the Capitol, with a main street connecting them *a la* Pennsylvania Avenue. There are more comfortable private mansions now in progress in Madison than in any other place I have visited, and the owners

the New York *Tribune* highly extolled its beauties. The result was quite marked, there being an almost immediate increase of population and a considerable advance in the price of real estate. Three hundred and fifty buildings were erected during the season, and the village papers reported with much pride that a thousand had been constructed since 1847.

The population had jumped to 6,863, a gain of 1,737 in twelve months, but Superintendent Kilgore, in his annual report, spoke despondently of the fact that the schools had not yet shared the general prosperity. He complained of "great irregularity" and "habitual tardiness;" of lack of interest on the part of parents; of the fact that all the clergymen in the village had spent in the aggregate only six hours during the year, in visiting the schools; of the fact that from 150 to 300 children were in private schools at home or abroad, and that 600 were attending no school whatever, and "as far as they are concerned might as well live in Central Africa as the Capital of Wisconsin." He said that the only school building owned by the city was "a small brick school-house [the Little Brick], fast becoming obsolete, and incapable of accommodating one-thirtieth of those entitled to public instruction." He complained that the citizens had given freely of their money for building churches, but not for the culture of the intellect. He alluded to the fact that "large sums of money had been subscribed to build a theatre—an institution of at least questionable merit, while 600 children are unprovided with even decent school-houses." Such criticism as this has a modern sound, for to this day most cities in the United States are still without sufficient school accommodations for their children.<sup>1</sup>

are mostly recent immigrants of means and cultivation, from New England, from Cincinnati, and even from Europe. Madison is growing very fast. \* \* \* She has a glorious career before her." Taylor's comment was: "For natural beauty of situation, Madison is superior to every other Western city that I have seen." Greeley and Taylor were here in connection with a lecture course (winter of 1854-55, and spring of 1856), in which other participants were James Russell Lowell, Parke Godwin, and John G. Saxe. September 12, 1860, Madison was visited by William H. Seward and Charles Francis Adams. August 31, 1861, Prince Napoleon and his beautiful young wife, a daughter of Victor Emmanuel, of Italy, with their suite, passed through *en route* to St. Paul, but shut themselves up in their railway carriage and declined to be gazed at by the crowd, which nevertheless good-naturedly cheered the travelers. John Walter, owner of the London *Times*, was in Madison in 1876. Sir Edwin Arnold visited us January 5-6, 1892, and afterwards wrote pleasantly of the city. Matthew Arnold was another of Madison's distinguished visitors; and Ole Bull married and long lived here. Longfellow, who wrote charmingly of Madison's "limpid lakes," was never in Wisconsin. The final chapter of our story records the visits of other celebrities, in later years.

<sup>1</sup> The following is a list of presidents and clerks of the Board of Education, since its organization in 1855:

<i>Presidents.</i>				<i>Clerks.</i>				<i>Presidents.</i>				<i>Clerks.</i>			
1855	W. B. Jarvis	-	-	W. A. White,	1864	W. T. Leitch	-	-	(W. A. Hayes,						
1856	W. B. Jarvis	-	-	Simson Mills,					(John A. Byrne,						
1857	{ W. B. Jarvis	-	-	{ D. S. Durrie,	1865	W. T. Leitch	-	-	S. H. Carpenter.						
	{ D. H. Wright	-	-		1866	E. W. Keyes	-	-	S. H. Carpenter.						
1858	D. H. Wright	-	-	H. G. Bliss,	1867-72	J. H. Carpenter	-	-	S. H. Carpenter.						
1859-60	David Atwood	-	-	H. G. Bliss,	1873-79	J. H. Carpenter	-	-	W. T. Leitch.						
1860	Julius T. Clark	-	-	H. G. Bliss,	1880-89	J. H. Carpenter	-	-	John Corseot.						
1862	J. W. Sterling	-	-	(H. G. Bliss,	1890-91	John B. Parkinson	-	-	John Corseot.						
				{ W. A. Hayes,	1892-95	Henry M. Lewis	-	-	O. S. Norsman.						
1863	W. T. Leitch	-	-	W. A. Hayes,	1896-97	John W. Stearns	-	-	O. S. Norsman.						
					1898-99	John Corseot	-	-	O. S. Norsman.						

## CHAPTER IV.

*Early Days of the City—1856-1865.*

Madison received a city charter March 4, 1856, the population being divided as equally as practicable into four wards—since increased to eight. Col. Jairus C. Fairchild was the first mayor, William N. Seymour the first clerk,<sup>1</sup> and the first city school board was composed of Wm. B. Jarvis (president), D. H. Wright, L. J. Farwell, L. W. Hoyt, Simeon Mills, and Darwin Clark.<sup>2</sup>

Educational interests were at once pushed to the front by the new school board, which in August induced the city fathers to appropriate enough money (\$6,887.50) to purchase sites for school houses in the First, Second, and Fourth wards; but there were no means for building, and the several ward schools still continued to be held in rented rooms. The total cost of conducting the school system in 1856 was \$4,334.06—it was not until the following year that the superintendent received a salary of \$1,000.

In its report at the close of 1856, the board spoke discouragingly of "the continued disgraceful, destitute condition of the city, with regard to school houses." Superintendent Kilgore, however, was more confident. While alluding, in his own report, to "the absence of anything in the material appurtenances of the schools \* \* \* calculated to gratify a love for the beautiful and to refine and elevate the taste," he nevertheless thought that the schools had been more prosperous during the year than at any former period, that there had been an increase of public interest in them, and that the pupils had creditably acquitted themselves. He referred to the fact that in his previous report he had said Madison was behind Waukesha, Beaver Dam, and Whitewater in the matter of public education; but now he thought that "things looked brighter." In 1857, the First and Third ward buildings were completed, the council evidently having seen that it was useless further to fight the school board.

<sup>1</sup> The following is a list of mayors from 1856 to the present time:

1856-57	-	-	-	Jairus C. Fairchild	1879-80	-	-	-	John R. Baltzell
1857-58	-	-	-	Augustus A. Bird	1880-81	-	-	-	Philip L. Spooner, Jr.
1858-61	-	-	-	George B. Smith	1881-84	-	-	-	James Conklin
1861-62	-	-	-	Levi B. Vilas	1884-85	-	-	-	Breese J. Stevens
1862-65	-	-	-	William T. Leitch	1885-86	-	-	-	Hiram N. Moulton
1865-67	-	-	-	Elisha W. Keyes	1886-87	-	-	-	Elisha W. Keyes
1867-68	-	-	-	Alden S. Sanborn	1887-88	-	-	-	James Conklin
1868-69	-	-	-	David Atwood	1888-90	-	-	-	M. Ransom Doyon
1869-71	-	-	-	Andrew Prouditt	1890-91	-	-	-	Robert M. Bashford
1871-72	-	-	-	J. B. Bowen	1891-93	-	-	-	William H. Rogers
1872-73	-	-	-	James L. Hill	1893-95	-	-	-	John Corseot
1873-74	-	-	-	Jared C. Gregory	1895-96	-	-	-	Jabe Alford
1874-76	-	-	-	Silas U. Pinney	1896-97	-	-	-	Albert A. Dye
1876-77	-	-	-	John N. Jones	1897-98	-	-	-	M. J. Hoven
1877-78	-	-	-	Harlow S. Orton	1898-99	-	-	-	Chas. E. Whelan
1878-79	-	-	-	George B. Smith	1899	-	-	-	M. J. Hoven.

The following city clerks have served from the organization of the city to the present time: April, 1856 to October, 1857, William N. Seymour; October, 1857 to April, 1858, Stephen H. Carpenter; April, 1858 to April, 1859, Henry Wright; April, 1859 to November, 1861, Charles G. Mayers; November, 1861 to July, 1865, William A. Hayes; July, 1865 to September, 1868, Stephen H. Carpenter; September, 1868 to April 1, 1890, John Corseot; April 1, 1890 to date, O. S. Norsman.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 21, for list of presidents and clerks of the board of education from 1855 to date.

The financial panic which swept over the country this year had its effect on the city finances, and the board was reluctantly obliged to abandon for a time its projects of buildings in the Second and Fourth wards. In 1858, the Madison Female Academy sold its building and grounds to the city as a home for the High School, which had hitherto been quartered in a church; in the same year, a school was opened in the Greenbush addition; the following year, the Northeast District school was established, in conjunction with the Town of Blooming Grove; the present Fourth Ward school house was opened in January, 1866; the Second Ward in 1867; the Fifth Ward in 1870; a new High School building on the site of the old Academy, in 1873; <sup>1</sup> in 1887, the Little Brick was demolished, to make room on the same site for a new Third Ward school building, which was enlarged in 1893; in 1891, Greenbush was given a new building; and in 1894 the new Sixth Ward building was constructed, being enlarged in 1896.

In 1856, Madison was the scene of political excitement of a serious character. William Barstow (Democrat) had been elected governor for the years 1854-55 by a plurality of 8,519. The Bashford- votes over Edward D. Holton (Republican) and Henry S. Baird (Whig). There Barstow contest. was much political bitterness in the State, and this was intensified during Bar-



THE OLD CAPITOL, IN BARSTOW'S TIME

stow's administration, largely because of his aggressive tone. Charges were freely made by his enemies that he had allowed his official staff to mismanage the school funds, and favor personal friends in the loaning of State money. However this may be, Barstow lost ground during his term, and although renominated failed to draw out his full party strength in the November election of 1855. The new Republican party, too, was now attaining huge proportions, and the result was, the balloting for governor proved so close that from the middle of November to the middle of December the people were in a state of unquiet, not knowing whether Barstow had been returned or whether he had been supplanted by his Republican opponent, Coles Bashford, an Oshkosh lawyer. The State board of canvassers was composed of Barstow supporters, and reported that he had received 157 majority. Bashford's friends claimed that the returns had been tampered with, and the Republican leaders prepared for a contest.

<sup>1</sup> The High School graduated its first class (fourteen members), July 2, 1875; eight of them entered the State University.



Barstow took the oath of office, January 7, 1856, amid the usual pomp of civic and military display, and remained in possession of the executive chamber. Bashford, on his part, was quietly sworn in by Chief-Justice Whiton, in the chamber of the State supreme court. The court was at once called upon by Bashford, in a *quo warranto* suit, to oust the incumbent and give the office of governor to the relator. Thus commenced the most celebrated case ever tried by the Wisconsin supreme bench. This was the first time in the history of the United States that a State court had been called upon to decide as to the right of a governor to hold his seat; its jurisdiction was questioned by Barstow's attorneys. The contest waged fiercely for some weeks, with eminent counsel on both sides,<sup>1</sup> the court at last holding that it had jurisdiction. Finally, being defeated on every motion, Barstow withdrew from the case, protesting that the judges were actuated by political considerations. The court proceeded with its inquiry, however, found gross irregularities in the canvass of votes, and declared (March 24) that Bashford had received a majority of 1,009. Meanwhile (March 24), Barstow, who had all along threatened that he would not "give up his office alive," sent in his resignation to the legislature, and Lieutenant Governor McArthur became governor by virtue of the constitution. McArthur was defiant, and announced his determination to hold the fort at all hazards. But the court promptly ruled that McArthur could gain no rights through Barstow — for the latter's title being worthless, McArthur could not succeed to it.

Through this long contest, it may well be imagined that popular excitement in and around Madison ran increasingly high. Parties of men representing both relator and respondent made no secret of the fact that they were armed and drilling, in anticipation of a desperate encounter. It would have taken small provocation to ignite this tinder box, but the management on both sides was judicious; and although the partisan bands had frequent wordy quarrels, and there were numerous and vigorous threats of violence, there was no approach to blows.

It was Monday, March 24, when the court rendered its decision. Bashford announced that on Tuesday he would take possession of the executive chamber. Early in the appointed day, people began to gather in the vicinity of the Capitol, coming in from the neighboring country in a circuit of ten miles, as they would flock to a traveling circus. By nine o'clock, the Capitol was crowded with citizens, chiefly adherents of Bashford, and there was much ill-suppressed passion. At eleven o'clock, Bashford and a party of his followers, encouraged by friendly cheers, made their way through the corridors — accompanied by the Dane county sheriff, with the court's judgment in hand — and rapping at the governor's office was invited to enter. Bashford — a portly, pleasant-looking gentleman of the old school — leisurely took off his overcoat, hung it and his hat in the wardrobe, and blandly informed McArthur and the coterie of friends about him, that he had come to take the helm of State. The incumbent indignantly asked whether force was to be used; whereupon the new-comer replied that he "presumed no force would be essential, but in case any were needed there would be no hesitation whatever, with the sheriff's help, in applying it." This was construed by McArthur as a "threat of constructive force," and he and his adherents at once hurried out of the door, passing through Bashford's friends, who cheered in triumph and then poured into the office to congratulate the new governor.

In the legislature, there was at first some opposition. The senate received Bashford's opening message with enthusiasm, and at once passed a congratulatory vote. The assembly at first refused (38 to 34) to hold communication with the governor, but finally thirty of the Democrats withdrew, after filing a protest, and the house then agreed (37 to 9) to recognize the new official.

<sup>1</sup> Bashford's counsel were Timothy O. Howe, Edward G. Ryan, James H. Knowlton, and Alexander W. Randall. Counsel employed for Barstow were Jonathan E. Arnold, Harlow S. Orton, and Matthew H. Carpenter.





PINCKNEY STREET, AND THIRD AND SIXTH WARDS  
From daguerreotype taken from rotunda of Capitol, 1856.

The system of government by the people had safely passed through a trying ordeal; popular passions soon subsided, and the fear of civil war in Wisconsin was at an end.

It will be remembered that the corner stone of the old Territorial Capitol was laid July 4, 1837. During 1836-37, the national government had appropriated \$40,000 for the building; the Territorial legislature voted some \$16,000, and Dane county \$4,000 — which would make the cost of the building about \$60,000. An old engraving of the first Capitol shows that it was of the then prevailing Americanized-Greek style, of which there are still left some examples, chiefly in the Southern States; contemporary accounts agree that it was rather superior in character to most of the Western Capitols of sixty years ago. On March 3, 1857, an act of legislature was approved, authorizing the enlargement of the Capitol — the



SITE OF THE PRESENT POSTOFFICE, ABOUT 1860

House facing Millin street was occupied by Postmaster Keyes; that in its rear, facing Wisconsin Avenue, was later moved to Langdon street, being nucleus of the present No. 260. City Hall, in left foreground.

plans developed into a new building; the "enlargement" was but nominal.<sup>1</sup> The State appropriated \$50,000 for this purpose, and the city of Madison \$30,000; but the money necessary for the work (\$541,447.93) was chiefly obtained from the sale by the school-land commissioners of the ten sections of land appropriated by congress "for the completion of public buildings." The work dragged slowly, largely from lack of funds because of the Civil War; it was 1863 before the task of demolishing the old Capitol was commenced, and 1870 before the dome was completed on the new. In 1882, the legislature voted \$200,000 for the present north and south wings, which greatly extended the capacity of the building. The total expenditures for the present Capitol and the development of the surrounding park, have been about \$900,000.

<sup>1</sup> The building of the City Hall was also commenced in 1857; it was opened to the public on the evening of February 22, 1858, and was then thought to be a grand building.

The core of the modern State house was scarcely complete, when, in 1859, Madison suffered a narrow escape from the removal of the Capital to Milwaukee. The breaking of a tie vote in the legislature, alone saved Madison. The closeness of the contest had rather a depressing effect on the city throughout the entire year; the official records of the time are filled with attempts to cut down expenses in many directions.

Madison's first militia company — the Governor's Guards — was organized at a meeting held January 30, 1858. A week later, another body of citizens, chiefly Irish-Americans, established Militia the Madison Guards. The martial spirit once stirred, it was not long before companies. (July 12) a cavalry company was formed—at first bearing the name Dane County Dragoons, which was subsequently toned down to Dane Cavalry. In April, 1861, during



FOURTH LAKE, FROM THE CAPITOL ROTUNDA, 1869  
Postoffice, City Hall, and Fuller Opera House in foreground.

the early war excitement, we read of a company styled Hickory Guards, of which Chief Justice Dixon was the captain. The Randall Guards of Madison constituted Co. H. of the Second Volunteer Infantry Regiment of the State (June, 1861), and served in the famous Iron Brigade. The Governor's Guard of our day, one of the crack companies of the Wisconsin National Guard, is a *post-bellum* organization. The Lake City Guards, organized in May, 1878, had a brilliant career for several years.

The outbreak of the War of Secession (1861) brought Madison prominently into public notice. Throughout the long contest, a large proportion (70,000) of the 91,327 men whom Wisconsin sent to the front, were at various times quartered in and drilled at Camp The war period. Randall.<sup>1</sup> A Madison company was, too, the first of all to volunteer. January 9, 1861, when apprehensions of war were in every mind, the Madison Guards (George E. Bryant,

<sup>1</sup> The fair grounds of the State Agricultural Society, tendered to the service of the State by the Society. After the War, the Society resumed its fairs on these grounds, until the annual exhibitions were removed to Milwaukee. In 1893, the State purchased the property for an athletic field for the State University, with a view to securing its proper maintenance as an historical site.

captain) had tendered its services to Governor Randall. "in case those services might be required for the preservation of the American Union." Sunday, April 14, Fort Sumter fell. Monday, President Lincoln issued his call for 75,000 three-months volunteers, but it did not reach Madison until Tuesday, when the governor issued a proclamation urging Wisconsin at once to send its quota of one regiment; at the same time he sent word to Captain Bryant accepting the tender made over three months before. The enrollment of men for this company began on Wednesday (the 17th), and on the same day the Governor's Guards (Capt. J. P. Atwood) also tendered their services, which were accepted on the 18th.<sup>1</sup> It is an interesting fact that a large number of the Wisconsin regiments in the field were officered by men from Dane county, which also sent to the War its full quota of privates.

It would be a long story, adequately to tell of the deeds of Madison men and women during the War, which were of course unusually arduous because of the almost constant presence at the Capital of large bodies of troops in camp and hos- pital. The streets were frequently enlivened by processions: great meetings were held in the Capitol, either to bid sent to the front, or to welcome home, with feast and song, the war-worn regiments. The war-worn regiments were organized into re- committees, and fairs and by them for the raising of money for the prose- cution of their work. Those were busy and soul-stirring times for the Capital.

The visitor to Forest Hill Cemetery will find in close proximity to many of our volunteers devoted to "boys in known as Confederate 139 Southern soldiers, Alabama Infantry, the



RUSTIC BRIDGE, MENDOTA DRIVE

course unusually arduous because of the almost constant presence at the troops in camp and hos- frequently enlivened by processions: great meetings were held in the Capitol, either to bid sent to the front, or to welcome home, with feast and song, the war-worn regiments. The war-worn regiments were organized into re- committees, and fairs and by them for the raising of money for the prose- cution of their work. Those were busy and soul-stirring times for the Capital.

Hill Cemetery will find, Soldiers' Rest, where lie buried, a neat plot gray," and popularly Rest. Here lie buried nearly all of the First name-slabs indicating

that most of them died in the month of May, 1862. It is a romantic story. The month before, 2,385 Confederates held Island Number Ten, in the Mississippi River, near New Madrid, Missouri; it was then the key to the situa- tion in the Western campaign. Long beleaguered by the Union forces, it became necessary to order the evacuation of the island, and during the night of April 6, in the midst of a wild storm of rain, all but a few hundred, after spiking the guns, succeeded in escaping to the Confederate lines on the mainland; those left behind, chiefly of the First Alabama, were captured by the Union army, and sent north to Camp Randall. They were in a wretched condition, from having stood for hours at a time, knee-deep, at the island batteries, and most of them were on arrival in Madison at once placed in the hospital. Deaths were numerous—sometimes ten a day—the poor fellows being placed to rest in the local cemetery. Their bodies have not, however, been un-

Confederate Rest—a romance of the War. The month before, 2,385 Confederates held Island Number Ten, in the Mississippi River, near New Madrid, Missouri; it was then the key to the situa- tion in the Western campaign. Long beleaguered by the Union forces, it became necessary to order the evacuation of the island, and during the night of April 6, in the midst of a wild storm of rain, all but a few hundred, after spiking the guns, succeeded in escaping to the Confederate lines on the mainland; those left behind, chiefly of the First Alabama, were captured by the Union army, and sent north to Camp Randall. They were in a wretched condition, from having stood for hours at a time, knee-deep, at the island batteries, and most of them were on arrival in Madison at once placed in the hospital. Deaths were numerous—sometimes ten a day—the poor fellows being placed to rest in the local cemetery. Their bodies have not, however, been un-

<sup>1</sup> See the remarkable record of this company, in *Durrie*, pp. 302-306. It furnished to the Union army, 1 brigadier general (Lucius Fairchild), 9 colonels, 6 lieutenant-colonels, 5 majors, 10 captains, 12 lieutenants, and 9 non-commissioned officers and privates; besides 1 captain to the Confederate army (H. C. Bradford, of the Washington Battery, C. S. Artillery).



cared for; Mrs. Alice W. Waterman, a Southern woman who later came to live in Madison, had the plot ornamented, and the graves neatly marked, and as the years went on added improvements to the ground, so far as her means would allow. She died September 12, 1897, to the last speaking affectionately of her "boys," whose final home she had so persistently cared for through nearly thirty years. The Confederate Veterans' Association is now (1899) endeavoring to raise money for the placing of an appropriate monument at Confederate Rest, in accordance with the wishes of Mrs. Waterman.

Despite the absence of so many of our citizens at the front, higher taxes and prices, and the general prevalence of financial stringency, Madison prospered during the War time. The presence of the troops enlivened the streets; a great deal of money was necessarily being spent by State and nation, for supplies and salaries, as well as by the soldiers for entertainments of various kinds; so that the hard times elsewhere so observable, were not here felt to the same degree. In its review for 1861, the *State Journal* was able to say: "The year 1861 has been an eventful one, but with all the trials of hard times, of which people have justly complained in other parts of

the country, Madison The business has been improvements of the siderable and substan- healthy financial con- zens." In 1862, the fewer in number; but pers record the erec- ber of dwellings and several "fine residen- ness "was promising. sirable improvements was the year of the cago & Northwestern and the placing on "pioneer of the steam Capt. Francis Barnes'



A GLIMPSE ALONG SHORE, LAKE MENDOTA

has been exempt. prosperous, and the town have been con- tial,' showing a dition of our citi- improvements were in 1863, the news- pation of "a large num- business blocks," and ces." In 1864, busi- and a number of de- made." This, too, arrival of the Chi- railway from Beloit, Lake Monona of the pleasure boats" here, long-famous "Scuta-

nawbequon." In 1865, "the improvements of the city for the year were numerous and valuable"—the most notable being the erection of the Soldiers' Orphans' Home, which for many years, until all the orphans had grown to maturity, did a most excellent work in maintaining them and in educating them for practical life.

The population of the city had by this time grown to 9,191, and the industries of the year, as ascertained by the internal revenue collectors, were valued as follows:

Iron manufactured and agricultural implements	- - - -	\$108,685	Lager beer	- - - -	\$61,110
Clothing	- - - -	100,806	Coal gas	- - - -	27,000
Flour, 12,000 barrels	- - - -	72,000	Cabinet ware	- - - -	14,000
Tin ware	- - - -	20,747	Boots and shoes	- - - -	29,508

<sup>1</sup> Among them, the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railway hotel at West Madison, and the miniature castle on Gorham street (now demolished), in the Second Ward.

## CHAPTER V.

*Madison Since the War — 1866-1899.*

Although, as has previously been noted (p. 26), it was 1870 before the Capitol dome was complete, the new building was made habitable for officials by January, 1866. Upon the twenty-fourth of that month, the library and museum of the State Historical Society formally occupied its quarters in the south wing of the Capitol, the occasion being celebrated with considerable *clat*. Wisconsin had had an historical society while it was yet in the Territorial stage. As a result of agitation begun in the columns of the *Mineral Point Democrat* (October, 1845), a society composed of some of the principal men of the Territory was formed in Madison in October, 1846. But that society accomplished nothing; and the one which succeeded it in 1849 (January 30) was but a slight improvement, accumulating only fifty books in its career of four years. In 1853, this society was reorganized, and in January, 1854, Lyman C. Draper, a young Philadelphia antiquary, became its first secretary and executive officer.<sup>1</sup> The collections now grew rapidly, and were arranged in the basement of the Baptist church: it was from here that they were in 1866 removed to the Capitol — in what were then thought "ample and luxurious" quarters. But in eighteen years the library had grown to 109,000 titles, and the portrait gallery and museum were proportionately large; it was chiefly to accommodate them that the new south wing of the Capitol was built, and into the three upper floors of this wing the Society moved in December, 1884. Even this space soon became crowded, such was the phenomenal growth of the collections in every department. The legislatures of 1895, 1897, and 1899 nobly responded to the persistent appeals of the Society for a fire-proof building of its own, equipped with all modern conveniences, and voted appropriations which ensured the erection of a structure (on grounds given by the regents of the State University, on the old "lower campus") creditable alike to the Society and the State.

The Society, now regarded as one of the proudest possessions of Wisconsin, is accredited by scholars, the country over, as having won a general standing equal to that of the Massachusetts society, the oldest and hitherto the foremost of American historical organizations; while in the work of investigation and publication, it is probably the most active of all. It has accumulated a library of 215,000 books and pamphlets, which ranks third in size and importance among the great historical libraries of the United States, and is the most important reference library west of the Alleghanies. While aiming to be a general library for scholars, it is strongest in the fields of Americana, English history, political science, and economics. It is resorted to by scholars and special investigators from all parts of the West and South, and its reading rooms are daily thronged with professors and students of the State University, to whom the collections are freely accessible. The Society's publications consist chiefly of *The Wisconsin Historical Collections* (biennial), *Class Lists* (occasional), *Portrait Gallery Catalogue* (triennial), and *Annual Report*: it

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Draper served as secretary from January, 1854, to January, 1887 — thirty-three years; being succeeded by Reuben G. Thwaites, who has since served. The office of librarian was held by Daniel S. Durrie from January, 1856, till his death, August 30, 1892; being succeeded by his former assistant, Isaac S. Bradley, who still holds the office.



also frequently issues bulletins of information. By a law of 1897, the several local historical societies in Wisconsin are now auxiliary to the State society, make annual reports to it, and send delegates to its annual meetings.

The Fourth of July celebration, in 1866, regarded in the light of a State peace celebration, was an event which will long live in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. Twenty-thousand people were upon the streets, 3,000 of them having arrived by railway from Beloit, Janesville, and elsewhere; there was a procession of veterans bearing Wisconsin battle flags, of soldiers, orphans, engine companies, etc., and the customary orations. It was in this year, also, that the board of regents of the State University purchased the greater part of the present experimental farm; and that Madison bought her first steam fire-engine (December).



THE CAPITOL IN MIDSUMMER  
View from Monona Avenue, about 1895.

We learn from the newspapers that in 1867 the first pipe organ came to town — in April, for Grace (Episcopal) church; and that (May 15) there was launched upon Lake Mendota the first steamboat built for that water—the “City of Madison,” a paddle-wheeler having an engine of 20 hp., length of 56 ft., beam of 13 ft., and a cabin 12 x 16 ft. Shipments from Madison had by this time assumed considerable proportions: over the Milwaukee & Prairie du Chien railway (Milwaukee system), had been transported to the East 232,904 bus. of wheat, and 386,500 lbs. of dressed hogs; the Chicago & Northwestern railway had carried East 279,167 bus. of wheat and 638,800 lbs. of dressed hogs.

At many sessions of the legislature, both Territorial and State, Milwaukee had sought to secure the removal of the Capital to that city. But in none of these efforts, before or since, was success so near as in 1870. February 19, an assembly bill for this purpose was introduced, and referred to the committee on state affairs. The committee, in reporting thereon, called attention to the fact that persons in attendance upon the sessions found

insufficient accommodations at the hotels; nevertheless, the State having already invested a large sum of money in the new capitol, the committee thought removal inexpedient. Thereupon the people of Milwaukee, backed by their county board of supervisors, made an offer to the State (February 28) of the free use of the county court house, then being constructed there. On the night of March 9, the bill came up in the committee of the whole. It was debated at great length, and with considerable acrimony, being finally reported for indefinite postponement by ayes 55, nays 31.

The United States census of 1870 revealed the fact that Madison had a population of 9,173 — about one-half of the present (1899). The assessed valuation of the real estate was \$2,500,000, and of personal property \$1,260,018. The board of education had in charge eight school houses valued at \$70,000, on sites valued at \$14,900, and there were 956 pupils.

The result of the removal agitation in 1870, induced the organization, soon after the legislative adjournment that year, of a stock company composed of prominent citizens, for the erection of the Park Hotel, which was opened to the public in August, 1871. The local newspapers of the day asserted, with customary exaggeration, that this building was at the time "the most costly and handsomest of the kind in Wisconsin."

Another event of 1871 was the completion of the United States building, which houses the post-office, the federal courts, the internal revenue collector, and other United States officials History of the resident here. The first post-office in Madison was established February 15, 1837, post-office. with John Catlin as postmaster,<sup>1</sup> but it was not opened for business until May 27 following. At first, Peck's house, on S. Butler street, was the post-office; but soon it was removed to Simeon Mill's store;<sup>2</sup> in 1841, Postmaster David Brigham moved it to "a small wooden building on the triangular corner of Main, King, and Pinckney streets;" Postmaster Abbott (1850-53) dispensed mail matter in a "small building" on King street occupying the site of Perry's old junk store; Postmaster Jones (1853-61) held forth in another "small building," — most buildings were small, in those days, — adjoining the State Bank; then the post-office went to the site of the present Burrows block; thence to the building on West Main street now occupied by Thuringer & Sons — whence it was removed to the new federal building in 1871.

The year was also notable for the organization of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters, which has since had a useful existence, chiefly as an agent for the publication of important monographic work, and the accumulation, by exchange, of a valuable library of sets of transactions of other learned bodies throughout the world. Other events were the completion of the railway to Portage, the first train over which line arrived in Madison on the 9th of January; and of the Northwestern line to Baraboo — at which latter place

<sup>1</sup> Madison's postmasters have been as follows: 1837-41, John Catlin; 1841-42, David Brigham; 1842-44, John Catlin; 1844-45, Steptoe Catlin; 1845-49, David Holt, Jr.; 1849-50, James Morrison; 1850-53, Channcey Abbott; 1853-61, John N. Jones; 1861-81, Elisha W. Keyes; 1881-85, George E. Bryant; 1885-89, Jared C. Gregory; 1889-94, George E. Bryant; 1894-98, James Conklin; March 1, 1898, Elisha W. Keyes, the present incumbent, was appointed. See historical sketch of Madison post-office, in Madison *Democrat*, Feb. 20, 1898.

<sup>2</sup> Mills had the contract for carrying the mail between Madison and Milwaukee; he employed a man to do this work, on horseback, and at first the service was but once a week, but later twice a week. Postmaster Catlin going East for a prolonged visit, his deputy was Franklin Hathaway, the surveyor of the Capitol park. The postoffice itself, Mr. Hathaway says, in a letter to the State Historical Society, "consisted of a small case of pigeon holes, closed by doors, standing on one end of the counter, in the only store then in operation. This was store, saloon and post-office, all in one, and was the lounging place of the [Capitol] workmen, after finishing the day's labor. The building, a one-story frame, was without lath or plaster, \* \* \* and was one of the four buildings then standing; the other three being a log house south of the square, near the bank of the third lake; a large 1½ story frame boarding house and tavern, the entire upper floor being one bare room, with rows of beds under the eaves, on each side, and a passageway through the middle, barely high enough to allow a man to stand erect; and a small frame office, for the use of Commissioner Bird; and these comprised all the improvements of which Madison could then boast."

there was (September 12) a joyous celebration. Ladies' Hall, at the State University, and the St. Regina Academy were among the many new buildings this year. The *Democrat*, in its review of 1871, says: "In increased railroad facilities and public improvements, the State has never made more rapid growth than in the past year, and Madison has made the same progress in all that tends to its substantial progress."

The principal event of the year 1872 was the meeting (July 4) of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee. There were 7,000 visitors from out of town, the lions of the occasion being Generals Phil Sheridan, Belknap (then secretary of war), Pope, and Noyes (then governor of Ohio).



THE CAPITOL, IN MIDWINTER

View taken from Pioneer Block, about 1896-97.

The large procession was in charge of Col. William F. Vilas and nine aides. Yacht and rowing races were held in the afternoon, and fireworks concluded the exercises in the evening. In 1873 over \$300,000 was spent in the city for new buildings—the new High School being chief in the long category.

The city assumed charge of the free library in May, 1875, being the first community in Wisconsin to take advantage of the State library law of 1872 allowing cities to tax themselves for the maintenance of such institutions.<sup>1</sup> In common with many other towns throughout the country, Madison's first public circulating library was inaugurated by an association called the Institute. This was organized April 8, 1854. Chancellor Lathrop, of the

<sup>1</sup> The Madison Public Library was opened May 21, 1875. Eau Claire came second, opening her library in the following October.

State University, was the president, and there was a long list of subordinate officers; a reading room was at first the chief attraction, and a debate section and a lecture committee were other features. The Madison Institute was at first flourishing, but gradually — there being a lack of funds with which to purchase fresh books — the interest of the public waned, only to be revived when the city undertook to conduct a library under the general State library law, since which time it has been an unqualified success. The library now contains about 16,000 books, well selected, and accessible through an excellent card catalogue, and the reading room is well patronized. The yearly expense to the city is about \$3,000.<sup>1</sup> Madison is liberally supplied with libraries. That of the State Historical Society contains 220,000 titles; the State (law) Library possesses nearly 10,000, and that of the State University a like number. These great aggregations of books, open to public use, form one of the chief attractions of Madison as a scholastic center.

The centennial year (1876) was properly celebrated by people of Dane county, by exercises in the Capitol Park, Prof. S. H. Carpenter, of the State University, being the orator of the occasion. Julia Ward Howe (January 19), Henry Ward Beecher (February 22), and Robert Ingersoll (May 22), were the city's most distinguished visitors in 1877; and February 17, Ole Bull, then a citizen of Madison, gave a concert for the benefit of the University art gallery. The last of the old-time taverns, the Lake House, was burned the 8th of April — it had been erected by Hank Carman in 1842. The first Science Hall, of the University, was opened on June 21. A tornado swept across the city on the 6th of July, doing much damage to trees and smoke stacks. August 21, the Lakeside Hotel (at what are now the Monona Lake Assembly grounds) was destroyed by fire. From August 22 to 24, occurred the first annual rowing regatta, on Lake Monona.

In the spring of 1878, the use of the telephone was inaugurated in Madison. Upon the twenty-fourth of May, Dane county was visited from east to west by a cyclone, the central path of which passed through the town of Oregon, six miles south of Madison. The damage was serious, many families being rendered homeless; the sufferers were aided by popular subscriptions of money and goods. President and Mrs. Hayes visited the city September 10, the President addressing the people at the State Fair grounds — Camp Randall; many thousands of visitors thronged into the city from all parts of Southern Wisconsin.

In 1879 (March 29), the chief event was the gutting of the Fairchild building, by fire; during the course of the conflagration there was a terrific explosion, from gunpowder stored in the basement, seventeen persons being injured. The construction of the summer hotel at Tonyawatha Springs was commenced this year.

Charles Stewart Parnell and John Dillon, the leaders of the Irish Land League, addressed an immense throng in the assembly chamber, at the Capitol, February 26, 1880. The general assembly of the Presbyterian church was held in Madison, May 20–31, of the same year, the attendance representing all portions of the country. September 6 and 7, the city was *en fete* to welcome General Grant, who spoke at the State Fair; it is probable that Madison was never before invaded by so many strangers.

The year 1881 is notable because of the great snow storm of January 26; and the opening of the first Wisconsin Sunday School Assembly (afterwards styled Monona Lake Assembly), at Lakeside, August 2.

In March and April, 1882, there was a small-pox scare, with four well-developed cases. April 27, bids for the city water works system were opened; the pipes were tested September 19, and the engine started at the pumping station December 2.

<sup>1</sup> The public librarians have been as follows: 1875 to July, 1877, Miss Virginia C. Robbins; July, 1877, to July, 1878, Miss Jennie M. Field; July, 1878, to July, 1879, Mrs. Laura H. Feilding; July, 1879, to July, 1884, Miss Ella A. Giles; July, 1884, to July, 1889, Miss Minnie M. Oakley; July, 1889, to May, 1893, Miss Sophie M. Lewis; May, 1893, to date, Miss Georgiana R. Hough.

Free postal delivery was inaugurated in Madison, April 16, 1883. Upon the eighth of November, that year, the south wing of the Capitol, then in course of construction, fell at noon, resulting in the death of eight workmen.

Matthew Arnold (January 25) and Père Hyacinthe (May 8) were the visiting lions of the year 1884. Upon the fifteenth of July, the National Educational Association opened its annual session in Madison, five thousand visitors being in attendance. In the course of Events of 1884.

the summer, some alarm and considerable discomfort were occasioned by an epidemic among the fish of our lakes: dead fish were washed ashore in huge winnows, and the city government was obliged, during several weeks, to employ teamsters to cart them away for burial. November 15, the first street cars, hauled by mules, made their trial trip. Upon the first of December, Science Hall was burned.



MADISON IN WINTER

Looking down Wisconsin Avenue towards the Capitol, about 1885.

The old Burrows Opera House, which for many years had been the city's playhouse, was condemned and closed January 8, 1885, and for five years thereafter our people were restricted to the use of Turner Hall. July 8, Madison was visited by a destructive tornado, declared by newspapers to be the "most destructive ever experienced in the place." A distinguished visitor of the year (September 18) was Hinrich Baron Berlepsch, of Dresden, Germany, who came to investigate the agricultural resources of Wisconsin. Events of 1885-86.

Three men were killed and seven injured by the explosion of a boiler in the St. Paul round-house, at West Madison station, January 22, 1886. The new Dane County court house was completed in November of the same year; and in December, the first art loan exhibition was held — in the rooms of the Y. M. C. A.

In 1887, Justin McCarthy (February 11), President and Mrs. Cleveland (October 7-10), Dr. Joseph Parker, of London (November 16), and Charles Dickens, son of the great novelist (De-



cember 7), were in the city. The visit of Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland was to Col. William F. Vilas, then secretary of the interior, and attracted to Madison large crowds of strangers; Events of 1887-89. it was made the occasion of considerable ceremonial.

Beyond the visit here of Lieutenant Schwatka, the arctic explorer, upon the fourth of December, there appears to have been little of importance recorded by the newspapers in 1888.

The city hospital constructed by Drs. Gill and Boyd was opened in 1889; and on September 21, the corner stone of Fuller's Opera House was laid.

April 7, 1890, Fuller's Opera House was formally opened—it had cost about \$80,000, and was pronounced one of the best of its size in the West; ten days later, Max O'Rell lectured there to a large audience. The monthly market day (chiefly for live-stock) was Events of 1890-91. inaugurated in Madison, this year. September 27, the Congregational Church celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its organization. Speaker Thomas B. Reed was here upon October 29.

The principal events of the year 1891 were the visit of Henry M. Stanley (February 18), the laying of the corner-stone (July 6) of Christ Presbyterian Church—the old church on Wisconsin Avenue having been sold to the Masonic bodies for a temple—and the opening to sale of lots in Elmside addition.

In 1892, Madison's principal progress was evinced in the mending of her ways: October 1, the street railway was first operated by electric cars; and two weeks later (October Events of 1892-93. 15) the Raymer drive was formally opened to the public.

The Masonic Temple was dedicated upon February 21, 1893; April 28, the University Heights Co. was organized, for the purpose of platting and opening to sale lots in that new suburb; August 17-20, there was held here the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; September 2, Labor Day was first observed in Madison; during September, a local electric fire-alarm system was inaugurated; and November 17, fire destroyed the principal building at Sacred Heart Academy (Dominican Sisters, Edgewood Villa).

The events of 1894 were: the opening of the University gymnasium, May 25; the annual meet of the Western Canoe Association, at Picnic Point, commencing July 10; the meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, October 10-13; Events of 1894-95. and the dedication of Cornelia Vilas Guild Hall, connected with Grace (P. E.) Church, November 15.

In 1895, the city entertained (June 4-6) the national convention of the Modern Woodmen of America, which attracted 20,000 visitors. From July 14 to August 4, there was held the first Catholic Summer School, which brought many distinguished Catholics from all parts of the United States.

The Columbian Catholic Summer School was permanently located in Madison, August 6, 1896. The political campaign brought to Madison several notable visitors—for the Republicans (September 23), Russell A. Alger, Gen. O. O. Howard, and Gen. D. E. Sickles; Events of 1896-97. and for the (silver) Democrats (October 31), William J. Bryan, their candidate for the presidency.

The opening of the Farwell drive, along the eastern shore of Lake Mendota, was one of the most satisfactory events of 1897; another, was the continuation of the street railway line to the suburb of Wingra Park, and to Forest Hill Cemetery. Dr. Nansen, the arctic explorer, lectured in the University gymnasium (November 22) to a large audience.

The year 1898 was notable as being the fiftieth since the admission of Wisconsin to the Union. The approval by the president, of the congressional act providing for admittance, bore date of May 29, 1848. As May 29, 1898, fell on Sunday, the anniversary was fittingly observed

by local celebrations at several county seats throughout the State, on Saturday, the 28th. The first state officers (Nelson Dewey, governor) were sworn in at Madison, on June 7, 1848; this being the actual date upon which the State of Wisconsin began business as such, it was, by legislative action, made the official anniversary, and a legal holiday. The event was celebrated at Madison throughout the seventh, eighth, and ninth of June by appropriate literary and patriotic exercises, in the presence of a large crowd of visitors.

April 28th, Madison bade a formal farewell to the Governor's Guard (Co. G., First Wisconsin Volunteers), who had enlisted for the Spanish-American war; the newspapers described the crowd as "the biggest turnout in the history of the city." The company on leaving Madison



A GLIMPSE OF MAIN STREET

From Tenny Block, looking southeast; July, 1899.

numbered 84 men, but was subsequently recruited to 105, under the United States army requirements. At first going to Camp Harvey, Milwaukee, the company left there May 20th for Camp Springfield (later, Cuba Libre), Jacksonville, Fla. The First Wisconsin was accounted one of the best drilled and equipped regiments in the volunteer service, but did not chance to be chosen to go to the front. The summer was therefore spent in camp, where Co. G. lost three men from typhoid fever. The company reached Madison on the return, September 10th, and were here mustered out on the twenty-seventh of the following month.

An explosion in the round-house of the Northwestern railway yards occurred January 24th, three men being killed and two badly hurt. On the 19th and 20th of February, Madison experienced the heaviest fall of snow since the great storm of 1881. The most notable visitor of the

year was Joaquin Miller, the "poet of the Sierras," who lectured at the Congregational Church on the ninth of December.

The State census of 1895 revealed the presence here of a population of 15,590. If the number of new houses built since then, and other evidences of growth, are to be taken as criterions, it is fair to assume that at the present time Madison contains about 20,000 souls.<sup>1</sup>



WINTER SCENE ON LANGDON STREET

From corner of N. Henry street, looking northeast, 1888-89.

The city school census in 1899 (persons between four and twenty years of age), was 5,388, and the total enrollment in the public schools 2,893—although the normal seating capacity of

<sup>1</sup>The following table shows the growth of Madison since its foundation:

1837 (April 15)	-	-	-	-	-	3	1854	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,126
1838	-	-	-	-	-	62	1855	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,863
1840	-	-	-	-	-	146	1860	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,611
1842	-	-	-	-	-	172	1865	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9,191
1844	-	-	-	-	-	216	1870	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9,176
1846	-	-	-	-	-	283	1875	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,093
1847	-	-	-	-	-	632	1880	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,324
1850	-	-	-	-	-	1,672	1885	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12,064
1851	-	-	-	-	-	2,306	1890	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13,426
1852	-	-	-	-	-	2,973	1895	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15,590
1853	-	-	-	-	-	4,029									

Previous to 1855, the census was taken by local enumerators, for village purposes. Commencing with that year, the count of years ending in 5 are the result of the State census, and that of years ending in 0 of the federal enumeration.

these schools is but 2,717. The school property is valued at \$225,000; the number of teachers employed is 61, and the amount spent in the last fiscal year, for running expenses of schools, exclusive of new buildings, was about \$46,000.<sup>1</sup>

The principal local events of 1899 have been as follows: January 14, the Fourth Ward school building was partially destroyed by fire. January 25, Mrs. Caroline Wheeler, said to have been the second white woman in Madison, died at Wauwatosa. February 5-12, Francis Murphy, the famous temperance agitator, was in the city. February 11, Darwin Clark, the oldest pioneer in Madison, died. February 16, William J. Bryan spoke in the University Gymnasium. April 1, Silas U. Pinney, of the State supreme court, died. April 5, James Conklin & Sons' barn on the shore of Lake Mendota, foot of North Hamilton street, was destroyed by fire, sixteen horses being lost. July 22, Mgr. Martinelli, the apostolic delegate of the Roman Cath-



SOME MADISON HOMES

A glimpse of Gilman street, from corner of N. Pinckney street, 1899. Executive Residence, third house down, on left side.

olic Church to the United States, visited the Columbian Catholic Summer School in Madison. July 26, Murat Halstead spoke on Aginaldo, at the Monona Lake Assembly. October 16, President William McKinley, en route from Sioux City, Iowa, to Milwaukee, stopped in Madison and spoke for ten minutes from the east steps of the Capitol, to about 6,000 people; the President was accompanied by Lyman J. Gage, secretary of state, Elihu B. Root, secretary of war, John D. Long, secretary of the navy, and Attorney General Griggs. October 20, Mrs. Roseline Peck, the first white woman to settle in Madison, died at her home in Baraboo.

The Madison of today is far different in appearance from that of twenty, or even fifteen, years ago. Not only has there been considerable growth, but the town has quite lost its former village

<sup>1</sup>It is recorded in Thwaites's *Historical Sketch of Public Schools of Madison*, p. 62, that in 1886 the number of teachers was 38, salary paid them \$17,902.57, enrollment "nearly 2,000," and value of school property "about \$100,000"—official figures, as are those for 1899, in the text above.





MADISON'S SKY-LINE

As seen from Turville's Beach, Lake Monona, 1899.



aspect; domestic architecture, which up to 1880 was severely simple, often crude, has developed to a stage quite equal to that found in cities of greater pretensions; the public and commercial buildings erected in late years are much superior to those of the olden time; the "modern conveniences" of the age—city water and sewerage, gas and electric light, telephones, etc.—are now provided for in most of the old houses and practically all of the new; private carriages are numerous, where formerly they were rare; electric street cars render intercommunication easy between the most distant parts of the city; building sites are no longer restricted to the high land, which is practically all taken up—the lowlands, not long ago thought forever doomed to rushes and frogs, are now being rapidly filled and settled upon; and there are "suburbs" enough to satisfy a town of five times the size of ours. In many directions, our people have taken upon themselves metropolitan ways: the homes of the city are well furnished—many of them luxuriantly; the shops, far more enterprising than of old, deal freely in goods which even a decade ago would have been thought impossible for this market, and advertise with a freedom welcome to the newspaper offices; and there is in general vogue a style and manner of living and dress quite foreign to the Madisonians of the '70's and early 80's.

All this has been accomplished so gradually as to be almost imperceptible, for Madison has in no sense been a "boom" town; but it has nevertheless come, and is a matter of comment among strangers who have known the city in earlier days. In a measure, of course, this is not peculiar to Madison alone—it is but a reflex of what has been happening the country over; since the War of Secession, the people of the United States have been fast becoming less provincial in habits of life and thought.

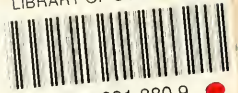
If we stop to inquire what it is that makes Madison grow—slowly, but surely and solidly—we shall find that the chief causes are three in number: (1) the rapid strides of the State University, which in twenty years has grown over 400 per cent; (2) the natural growth of the resident official class—federal, State, and county—keeping pace with the lusty development of the commonwealth; (3) the railroad interests, which are considerable, now that we have lines reaching out to all the cardinal points of the compass, and a considerable transfer and wholesale business centered here. Madison's manufactories have never developed to the extent long hoped for—although what factories we have, are of considerable importance to the town.

In short, Madison came into being because its site was selected for the capital, and the city can still say that her present and future largely depend upon her position as such. Time was, when this status was in serious danger; but it may safely be predicted that, with the millions here invested by the Commonwealth in the University and other public buildings—all of which would have to be rebuilt elsewhere, were the Capitol removed—Madison will ever continue to be the seat of State government, the political as well as the educational center of Wisconsin.



TOWN AND GOWN

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